



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Follow-up

Guidance for regional consortia and inspectors

September 2017

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Follow-up guidance for regional consortia and inspectors

This document provides guidance on follow-up activity for the inspection of regional consortia from September 2017.

In its 2016 guidance for the inspection of regional consortia, Estyn set out how it would follow up its initial inspection of each consortium. That document says that Estyn will not use categories of follow-up. Instead, a monitoring visit will be made to each regional consortium, about a year after its inspection. This visit will review the progress the consortium has made in addressing each recommendation.

This guidance document sets out in more detail how inspection teams will undertake their follow-up activity. This guidance will also help regional consortia to prepare for the follow-up, and to help them understand what the inspection team will consider when deciding on the most appropriate outcome from the visit.

Each follow-up visit will involve a small team of inspectors, and may include the WAO where appropriate. The follow-up visit will take no longer than one week. Consortia will be formally notified of their visit at least four weeks in advance (discounting school holidays). However, to assist the consortium with planning the work of staff, Estyn will informally notify the consortium of the likely date of its visit during the summer term 2017.

After the visit, Estyn will write to the consortium with an evaluation and judgement of the progress it has made in addressing each recommendation. The letter will not include a summative evaluation of overall progress because consortia are not in formal follow-up categories. Where appropriate and significant, Estyn may evaluate and comment on progress against the shortcomings identified in the body of the report in addition to evaluating the specific recommendations.

Estyn does not plan to make any further follow-up visits to consortia after the initial follow-up visit. Any remaining areas for improvement will be monitored informally by Estyn's regional link inspector and the relevant local authority link inspectors, and considered during future inspections of local government education services.

Guidance on undertaking follow-up visits to regional consortia

Following the announcement of the dates for the follow-up visit to each regional consortium, the reporting inspector (RI) will discuss the arrangements for the visit with the managing director.

The follow-up team will require the usual arrangements, for example a base room, (e.g. for power sockets, refreshments, and space for conducting board room style meetings with the facility to make presentations), satellite meeting rooms for interviews, and car parking.

The consortium should provide the follow-up team with an up-to-date self-evaluation report (SER), which takes into account its own evaluation of its progress against each recommendation, and any additional areas for improvement noted in the original inspection report's text. This SER can take whichever format is most appropriate for the individual consortium, and should be based upon its routine monitoring processes. There is no need for a bespoke piece of work to be prepared.

Estyn will make use of its own analysis of 2016 key stage performance data and 2017 provisional or verified data as available at the time of the visit. The consortium should provide its most up to date unverified data, in order to provide a context for the evaluation of the impact of its work with schools – in order for this to be as up-to-date as possible. There is no requirement for the consortium to provide this well in advance of the visit.

In line with Estyn's approach with other follow-up activity, the consortium will not be required to provide a nominee. The reporting inspector will liaise daily with a nominated senior leader to brief them on the progress of the inspection and provide an opportunity for the consortium to discuss any issues.

The consortium should provide a short presentation at the start of the visit (30 minutes maximum), setting out its own evaluation of the progress made generally in the region as well as specifically for each recommendation, together with any other key messages it wishes to team to take into consideration.

In evaluating progress for each recommendation inspectors should consider the following:

- Has the consortium understood the reasons behind the recommendation?
- Has the consortium taken reasonable action to address the recommendation successfully, taking into account its starting point, the time between inspection and follow-up visit and the complexity of the issues to be addressed?
- Has the consortium been appropriately supported in addressing the recommendations by its partner local authorities?
- Has the consortium ensured that changes arising from its progress in addressing each recommendation have become embedded enough within its working practices to secure sustained improvement?

If the consortium is deemed to have only made limited progress in one or more recommendations then the follow-up team should consider carefully whether to amend or make additional recommendations.

Formal feedback

At the end of the on-site part of the follow-up visit, the reporting inspector along with members of the follow-up team will provide oral feedback to the joint committee or company board and, by agreement, other senior staff of the consortium or its local authorities. The feedback should convey the main findings of the visit. The reporting inspector should explain to the consortium that issues may be raised and discussed, factual matters may be corrected and judgements may be clarified, although they are not negotiable.

All of the judgements that are reported during the visit are provisional and confidential. This should be made absolutely clear to all present at the start of the feedback session.

Post-visit

Following the visit, Estyn will draft a letter to the chair of the joint committee or company board, and copy this letter to the chief executives of the partner local authorities. The letter will set out the inspection team's evaluation and judgement of progress for each recommendation, along with any other key messages or amended or new recommendations. The letter will be sent no later than 10 working days from the final day of the visit. Estyn will allow five working days for the consortium to check the factual accuracy of the letter. Estyn will then finalise the letter and send it no later than 20 working days from the final day of the visit. The final letter will be copied to the Welsh Government and the Wales Audit Office and published on Estyn's website.